

HORROR



THE VAULT OF HORROR



FEATURING



THE VAMPIRE LADY



THE CRYPTID



THE GHOST

THAT'S IT! THAT'S IT!
DRIVE THE STAKE THROUGH
HIS VAMPIRE HEAD!



OBJECTIONABLE 1950s EC COMICS!



NO. 9
OCT



200
275
CANADA

THE VAULT OF

HORROR®

FEATURING...



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH

THAT'S IT! THAT'S IT!
DRIVE THE STAKE THROUGH
HIS VAMPIRE HEART.

JOHN
CRAIG

BACK ISSUES!!

THE COMIC YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS IS PART OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL, FACSIMILE REPRINTING OF THE **FAMOUS (AND INFAMOUS!) EC COMICS** LINE OF THE EARLY 1950s! WE STARTED WITH THE **FIRST ISSUE** OF EACH TITLE AND ARE ON OUR WAY TO THE **BITTER END!** GET ON THE BANDWAGON, AND **FILL IN THE GAPS** IN YOUR COLLECTION FROM THIS BACKLIST!!



CRYPT #1



CRYPT #2



CRYPT #3



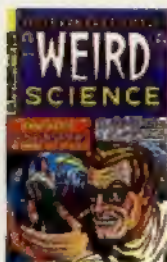
CRYPT #4



CRYPT #5



CRYPT #6



W SCI #1



W SCI #2



W SCI #3



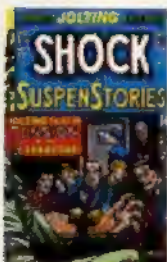
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W SCI #6



SHOCK #1



SHOCK #2



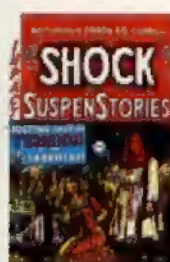
SHOCK #3



SHOCK #4



SHOCK #5



SHOCK #6

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Vault of Horror (USPS 009307) Vol. 1, No. 9, October 1994. Published quarterly in October, January, April and July by Gemstone Publishing, 202 Aid, West Plains, MO 65775-3532. Second-class postage paid at West Plains, MO. Entire contents © 1994 by William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. Vault of Horror #20 © 1951 by L.L. Publishing Co., Inc., re © 1982 by William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing herein contained may be reproduced without the written permission of William M. Gaines, New York. Annual subscription rate \$8 (\$12 outside US payable in US funds). Printed in U.S.A. Postmaster: send address changes to Vault of Horror, Russ Cochran, POB 469, West Plains, MO 65775-0469.

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH, HEH! WELL, GATHER 'ROUND, KIDDIES, FOR ANOTHER GRUESOME TALE FROM MY PRIVATE COLLECTION HERE IN THE VAULT OF HORROR! THIS ONE STEMS FROM THE EXCITING LIFE UNDER THE BIG TOP... YES, THE CIRCUS! FROM ITS PULSATING BEGINNING TO THE FINAL SHOCKING CLIMAX, I KNOW YOU'LL FIENDISHLY ENJOY THE STORY I CALL...

ABOUT FACE!



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE NOW PRESENT THE GREATEST LIVING WILD ANIMAL TRAINER IN THE WORLD! HER SENSATIONAL FEATS OF DARING MAKE BRAVE MEN TREMBLE! I GIVE YOU THE ONE AND ONLY...

LYDIA ARMSTRONG!

LYDIA ARMSTRONG! "BEAUTY" AND "BRAVERY" WERE SYNONOMOUS WITH HER NAME... AND THE AUDIENCE SAT SPELLBOUND AS SHE PUT THE BIG CATS THROUGH THEIR PACES!



SHE RISKED DEATH AGAIN AND AGAIN WHILE SHE PERFORMED... AND SHE CLIMAXED HER ACT BY LYING FLAT ON HER BACK, UNARMED, WITH HER HANDS BENEATH HER...



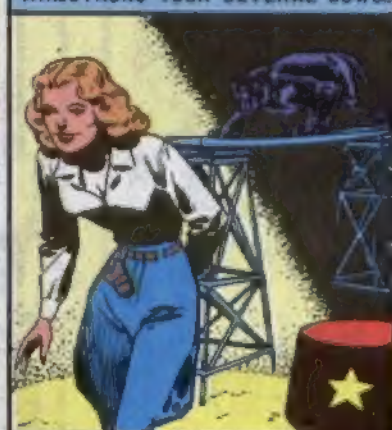
SLOWLY, THE HUGE BEAST DID HER BIDDING! HE STOOD OVER HER SUPPLE FORM... THEN BENT HIS SHAGGY HEAD. AT HER COMMAND, HIS MOUTH OPENED...



THEN, WHILE THE AUDIENCE GASPED, SHE LET THE LION'S JAW CLOSE ABOUT HER FACE!



THE CROWD'S THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE ROLLED THROUGH THE BIG TOP LIKE THUNDER! LYDIA ARMSTRONG TOOK SEVERAL BOWS.



... THOSE WHO SAW THE SLEEK BLACK PANTHER CROUCH TO SPRING... AND WHO CRIED OUT IN WARNING ... COULD NOT BE HEARD ABOVE THE TUMULTUOUS OVATION! THE BEAUTEOUS LYDIA TURNED... **TOO LATE!**



OVER AND OVER THEY ROLLED IN THE CENTER OF THE CAGE AS THE PANTHER CLAWED HER BODY AND TORE VICIOUSLY AT HER FACE! BAREHANDED, LYDIA FOUGHT VALIANTLY...



SHREDS OF HER FLESH AND CLOTHING WERE STREWN ABOUT THE RING BEFORE HER ASSISTANTS FINALLY SUBDUED THE BLOOD-MAD PANTHER AND CARRIED LYDIA OUT...



THEY RUSHED HER TO THE HOSPITAL... BUT THERE WAS LITTLE THE SURGEONS COULD DO!

SHE'S BEEN TERRIBLY RIPPED AND TORN!

... LUCKY IF SHE LIVES!

... HER FACE! HOW... HOW HORRIBLE!



HEH! HEH! WELL, LYDIA LIVED! THEY HAD PATCHED HER BODY UP TILL IT WAS GOOD AS NEW... BUT THERE WAS NOTHING THEY COULD DO TO FIX HER FACE! SHE WORE A BLACK VEIL TO HIDE THE HIDEOUS SIGHT... AND SHE BROODED DEEPLY! HEH! HEH!



STOP! DON'T YOU DARE TAKE A PICTURE OF ME! GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE!

OUCH! OUCH! OUCH! OUCH! OUCH! OUCH! OUCH! OUCH! OUCH! OUCH!



LYDIA ARMSTRONG RETIRED FROM THE WORLD! HER MAID AND CHAUFFEUR WERE THE ONLY PEOPLE SHE SAW...

NO ONE'S EVER SEEN HER FACE! POOR THING! SHE'S SO WEALTHY... AND YET SO LONELY!



YES... THE WORLD FORGETS SO SOON! IT MUST BE AWFUL TO BE IN HER POSITION... I FEEL SO SORRY FOR HER!

I THINK SHE'S CRACKED UP! HAVE YOU SEEN THE KIND OF BOOKS SHE'S COLLECTING?



BEHIND LOCKED DOORS, LYDIA PORED OVER STACKS OF ANCIENT BOOKS WRITTEN IN A STRANGE LANGUAGE ABOUT *WITCHCRAFT*!

...IT MUST BE IN ONE OF THESE BOOKS! IT MUST BE! I HOPE I'M TRANSLATING CORRECTLY!



LATE INTO THE NIGHT SHE READ, AND OFTEN TILL THE NEXT MORNING...

IT'S NOT HERE! MAYBE THAT NEW SET OF BOOKS WILL HAVE WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR!



WHEN SHE WASN'T COOPED UP IN HER ROOM, HER CHAUFFEUR WOULD DRIVE HER THROUGH THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE...

BEAUTIFUL DAY, ISN'T IT, MISS ARMSTRONG?

YES... BEAUTIFUL! NOT *UGLY*... NOT LIKE MY FACE!

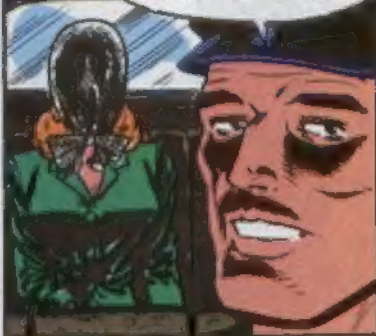


YOU SHOULDN'T TALK LIKE THAT, MISS ARMSTRONG! GOOD LOOKS AREN'T EVERYTHING! NOBODY LIKES TO EAT A ROTTEN APPLE JUST BECAUSE THE SKIN IS PRETTY! IT'S WHAT'S *INSIDE* THAT COUNTS!



YOU... YOU SOUND LIKE YOU MEAN THAT... STEVE!

I *DO* MEAN IT! TO ME, YOUR FACE DOESN'T MEAN A *THING*! I LIKE YOU AND WORK FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU... WELL, BECAUSE YOU'RE A WONDERFUL GIRL!



YOU... YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT! I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!

YOU DON'T? ALL RIGHT... THEN I'LL *PROVE* IT!



TO HER SURPRISE, STEVE PULLED TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AND PARKED...

WHA... WHY DID YOU STOP? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

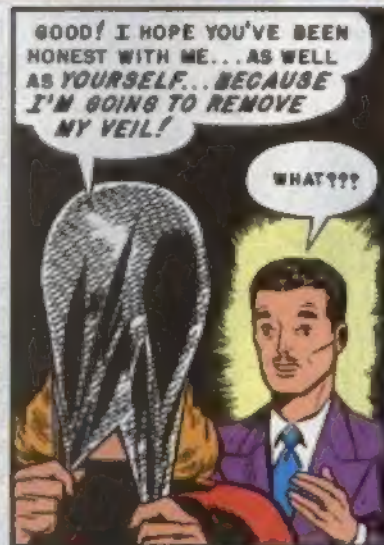
I'M JUST GOING TO PROVE TO YOU THAT I MEANT ALL THOSE THINGS I SAID! C'MERE!



AFTER THAT, THEY WENT DRIVING MORE OFTEN! AND LYDIA FOUND HERSELF DEVOTING LESS AND LESS TIME TO THE READING OF WITCHCRAFT BOOKS!



HEH, HEH! YES, LYDIA VERY QUICKLY FELL IN LOVE WITH STEVE! THE MONTHS PASSED...



EVERY FIBRE AND MUSCLE IN STEVE'S BODY SHUDDERED AT THE TWISTED, GHASTLY SIGHT THAT HAD BEEN BARED TO HIS EYES... AND ONLY HIS IRON WILL KEPT HIM FROM FAINTING...



THEY STARED AT ONE ANOTHER FOR LONG, AGONIZING MINUTES! DROPLETS OF SWEAT FORMED ON HIS BROW AS STEVE STRAINED TO KEEP HIS COUNTEenance PASSIVE! THEN SUDDENLY LYDIA FLUNG HERSELF INTO HIS ARMS, SOBBING HYSTERICALLY FOR JOY!



IN LYDIA'S EYES, STEVE HAD PROVEN HIS LOVE FOR HER, AND SHE WAS VERY HAPPY. THEN ONE NIGHT SHE FINALLY FOUND WHAT SHE HAD BEEN SEARCHING FOR IN HER MANY BOOKS...

HERE IT IS! BUT...NOW THAT I KNOW STEVE LOVES ME, IT DOESN'T SEEM SO IMPORTANT!



LYDIA THRUST THE BOOKS ASIDE AND FORGOT ABOUT THEM! SHE AND STEVE WERE TOGETHER ALWAYS... BUT ONE DAY, SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, SHE NOTICED A CHANGE IN STEVE! AND IT WORRIED HER!



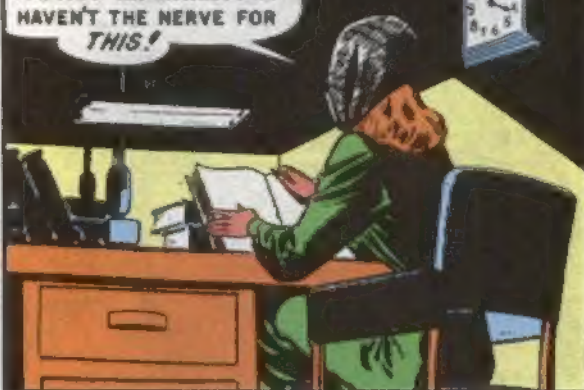
YOU SEE, DARLING... I WANT TO EARN ENOUGH MONEY SO YOU WON'T FEEL THAT YOU ARE SUPPORTING ME! I WANT YOU TO BE PROUD OF ME... ONLY IT TAKES MONEY TO GET STARTED!

I KNOW, STEVE! HOW MUCH WILL YOU NEED?



THROUGH LONG WEARY HOURS SHE READ AND TRANSLATED THE WEIRD CRYPTIC PASSAGES...AND WHEN SHE HAD FINALLY FINISHED...

BRR...JUST AS WELL THAT IT'S *NOT* IMPORTANT! I HAVEN'T THE NERVE FOR THIS!



IS ANYTHING WRONG, DEAR? YOU SEEM SO THOUGHTFUL AND QUIET LATELY!

IT'S NOTHING, LYDIA! I...I'VE JUST BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY FUTURE! I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SET MYSELF UP IN BUSINESS, BUT...WELL...



OH...A LOT! I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY! WHY?

I HAVE *PLENTY* OF MONEY! WHY NOT LET ME START YOU IN BUSINESS? YOU CAN PAY ME BACK LATER!





OH, NO, LYDIA! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANOTHER WORD! IN FACT, BESIDES, I'LL CALL MY LAWYERS TODAY AND AUTHORIZE THEM TO GIVE YOU **POWER OF ATTORNEY!**



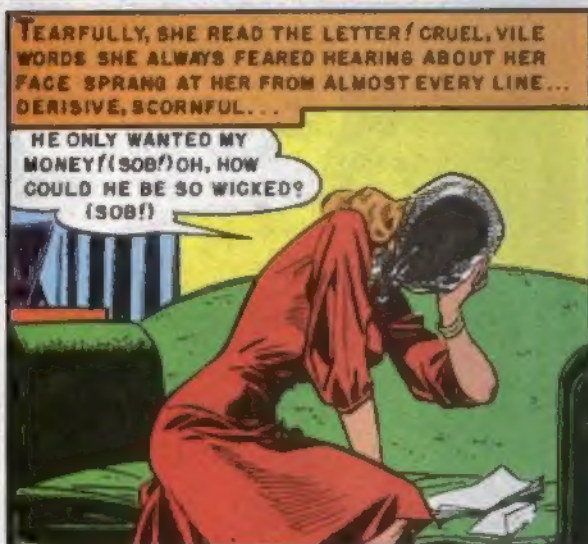
AND THAT WAS THAT! LYDIA'S LAWYERS BROUGHT THE PAPERS FOR HER TO SIGN...

THERE! NOW, DARLING, YOU ARE IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF ALL MY WEALTH!



SEVERAL DAYS LATER, SHE RECEIVED A LETTER...

WHY...IT'S FROM STEVE! AND IT'S POSTMARKED 'FLORIDA'! HE'S LEFT ME! HE'S TAKEN ALL MY MONEY AND LEFT ME!



TEARFULLY, SHE READ THE LETTER! CRUEL, VILE WORDS SHE ALWAYS FEARED HEARING ABOUT HER FACE SPRANG AT HER FROM ALMOST EVERY LINE... DERISIVE, SCORNFUL...

HE ONLY WANTED MY MONEY! (SOB!) OH, HOW COULD HE BE SO WICKED? (SOB!)



I'LL FIX HIM! I'LL SHOW HIM! AH! HERE'S THAT WITCHCRAFT BOOK! IF THIS WORKS, HE'LL BE SORRY FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE!



ACCORDING TO THE BOOK, I'LL NEED TWO PORTRAITS! ONE OF MYSELF AS I LOOKED BEFORE THE ACCIDENT... AND ONE OF STEVE! I GUESS THESE PHOTOGRAPHS WILL DO!



FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS, SHE FILLED A HUGE CAULDRON WITH WEIRD LIQUIDS, AND HEATED IT TILL IT BUBBLED WITH INTENSE FURY...

THERE! EVERYTHING'S READY! THIS HAS TO WORK! IT HAS TO!

THEN SHE TOOK BOTH PHOTOS AND DIPPED THEM INTO THE SEETHING BREW...



FERVENTLY WHISPERING A BLACK INCANTATION, SHE WAITED A SPECIFIC LENGTH OF TIME...

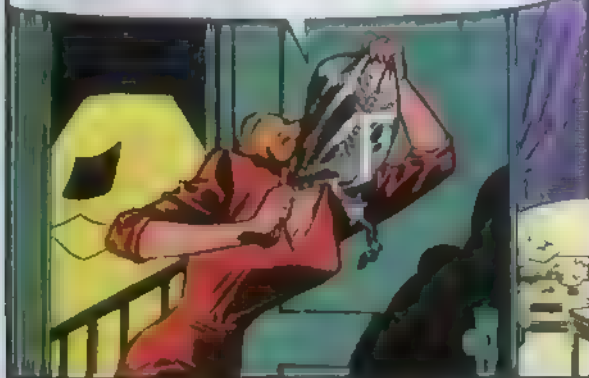


AND THEN WITHDREW THE PHOTOGRAPHS!

WHY! THEY'RE BLANK! AND THE CAULDRON HAS CEASED TO BOIL!



DID IT WORK? *I MUST SEE! A MIRROR!* OH, I'M SO NERVOUS I CAN HARDLY TAKE OFF MY VEIL!



AND IN FLORIDA.

AAAGGH-HH-H! STEVE!
YOUR FACE!



BREATHLESSLY SHE YANKED THE COVERING FROM HER FACE! A STARTLED GASP ESCAPED FROM HER TWITCHING LIPS...

IT WORKED! OH, I'M BEAUTIFUL AGAIN! THANK HEAVENS! OH, THANK HEAVENS!



HEH, HEH! I BET STEVE'S NEW GIRL FRIEND WAS SURPRISED! BUT IN A WAY HE WAS A BIT TWO-FACED, WASN'T HE? YOU MIGHT THINK THAT LYDIA ACTED A LITTLE CATTY ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR, BUT AFTER ALL, SHE'D LIVED WITH CATS FOR YEARS! WHEN SHE GOT HER BEAUTY BACK, SHE WAS PRETTY AS A PICTURE!

We want letters! Write to:
VAULT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 488
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

... AND READ
THE VAULT KEEPER'S
CORNER IN THIS ISSUE!
HEH! 'BYE FOR NOW!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

GREETINGS, GHOULS! YES, IT'S ME *THE CRYPT-KEEPER*..AGAIN! NOW THAT THE *VAULT-KEEPER* HAS FINISHED HIS NURSERY TALE, I'LL ENTERTAIN YOU WITH A HORROR STORY! THIS ONE IS ANOTHER FROM MY VAST COLLECTION OF *TERROR TALES* THAT I JEALOUSLY GUARD HERE IN THE CRYPT! IT'S A YARN SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO CURDLE YOUR BLOOD AND MAKE THE HAIR ON YOUR NECK BRISTLE AND CRAWL! I CALL IT..

THE RELUCTANT VAMPIRE!



AS THE LAST RAYS OF THE SETTING SUN RETREAT BEFORE THE ADVANCING ARMY OF NIGHT, MY STORY BEGINS! DOWN IN THE DISMAL STALE-SMELLING BLACKNESS OF A CELLAR, LIES A ROTTING, COB-WEBBED COFFIN! SUDDENLY ITS RUSTED HINGES SCREAM IN PROTEST AS THE LID RAISES! A HOLLOW-CHEEKED, WHITE-SKINNED MAN SITS UP...



JACK
DAVIS

THE SAUNT MAN CLIMBS FROM THE COFFIN... TURNS AND CLOSES THE LID CAREFULLY.

BE SAFE FROM PRYING EYES, DEAR HOME, UNTIL THE MORNING, WHEN I WILL RETURN!

BRUSHING OFF THE BITS OF SOIL THAT CLING TO HIS SHABBY CLOTHES, THE WEIRD FIGURE CLIMBS THE RICKETY STAIRS THAT LEAD FROM HIS SUBTERRANEAN REFUGE...

IF I'M LATE AGAIN, I'LL LOSE MY JOB! THEN... UGH! BACK TO KILLING!

...OUT OF THE ABANDONED RUINS OF A ONCE PROUD LOFT BUILDING, HE MOVES, DOWN NARROW, TWISTING STREETS... NOW DESERTED BY THE FACTORY WORKERS THAT THROG THEM DURING THE DAY...

AND THAT WOULD BE A SHAME... WHEN THIS WAY IS SO MUCH EASIER!

... ON INTO THE HEART OF THE CITY AT THE DOORWAY TO AN IMPOSING BUILDING, THE STRANGE FIGURE STOPS, SMILES AT THE SIGN POSTED THERE THEN ENTERS...

AH! TWO MINUTES TO NINE! I'M EARLY!

CENTRAL CITY
BLOOD
DONOR
CENTER

GIVE A PINT
TODAY!
SAVE A LIFE
TOMORROW!
OPEN EVERY NIGHT
TILL NINE P.M.

HE IS GREETED BY AN ANXIOUS, OVERWEIGHT MAN...

AH! MR. DRINK! THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE EARLY! I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT UP-TOWN! GOOD EVENING!

EVENING, MR. CROSS!

MR. DRINK WATCHES AS MR. CROSS STAMPS FROM THE BLOOD DONOR CENTER AND LOCKS THE DOOR. THEN HE PICKS UP THE RING OF KEYS, THE CLOCK, AND THE BANGED CAP...

WHAT A GINCH! A NIGHT WATCHMAN IN A BLOOD BANK!

MR. DRINK UNLOCKS THE DOOR MARKED 'BLOOD BANK, REFRIGERATED, KEEP OUT' AND GOES IN. ON THE SHELVES ARE ROWS OF BOTTLES FILLED WITH BLOOD...

THE PERFECT JOB FOR A VAMPIRE!

HEN, HEN! YES, KIDDIES! IT'S JUST AS YOU SUSPECTED! MR. DRINK IS A VAMPIRE! A LAZY VAMPIRE! UNTIL THE IDEA OF GETTING A JOB IN A BLOOD BANK OCCURRED TO MR. DRINK, HE HAD TO GO ABOUT GETTING HIS BLOOD IN THE USUAL WAY... BY KILLING PEOPLE! BUT

THIS... THIS WAY IS MUCH EASIER... AND SO MUCH LESS DASTEFUL...



AFTER MR. DRINK HAS SATISFIED HIS APPETITE...

NOW TO CHANGE THE RECORDS OF THE DAY'S DONATIONS!

RECORDS



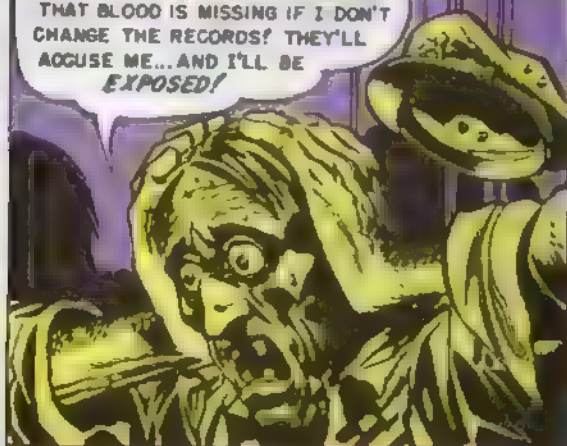
MR. DRINK UNLOCKS THE DOOR TO THE OFFICE WHERE THE RECORDS ARE KEPT AND...

THE RECORD BOOKS! THEY'RE NOT HERE!



FEAR CLUTCHES AT MR. DRINK'S VAMPIRE HEART

WHAT LL I DO? THEY LL FIND OUT THAT BLOOD IS MISSING IF I DON'T CHANGE THE RECORDS! THEY'LL ACCUSE ME... AND I'LL BE EXPOSED!



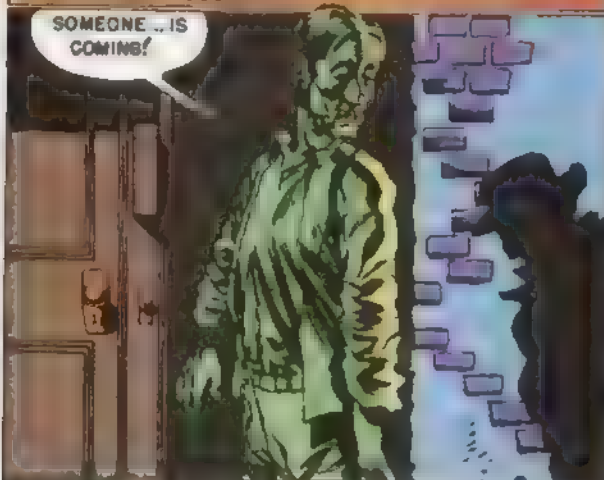
MR. DRINK RUSHES FROM THE BLOOD DONOR CENTER... CARRYING A SMALL BLACK BAG...

I'VE GOT TO REPLACE THE BLOOD I'VE TAKEN!



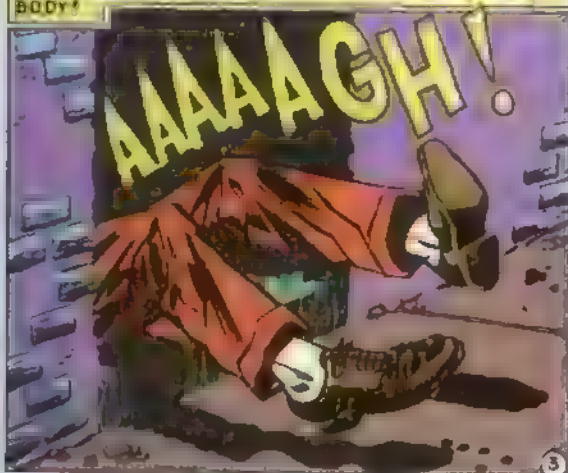
ON A DARK DESERTED STREET, MR. DRINK WAITS IN THE SHADOWS OF A DOORWAY

SOMEONE... IS COMING!



THE NIGHT IS FILLED WITH THE SCREAMS OF A DYING MAN, AS THE BLOOD IS DRAINED FROM HIS BODY!

AAAAAGH!



THE NEXT NIGHT, WHEN MR. DRINK COMES TO HIS JOB AT THE BLOOD DONOR CENTER, THERE IS AN UNUSUAL MEETING TAKING PLACE...

WHAT'S GOING ON, SALLY? IT'S PAST CLOSING TIME!

MR. CROSS HAS CALLED A MEETING OF THE STAFF, MR. DRINK! HE HAS AN ANNOUNCEMENT.



MR. CROSS CLEARS HIS THROAT, AND A HUSH FALLS OVER THE GATHERING...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! I HAVE CALLED THIS MEETING TO ANNOUNCE THAT **UNLESS** THIS CENTER TAKES IN **TWICE** THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD IT **HAS** BEEN TAKING IN, THE HOME OFFICE IS GOING TO **CLOSE** US UP. OUR EQUIPMENT WILL BE SENT TO ANOTHER CENTER WHERE IT WILL BE PUT TO BETTER USE!

BUT, MR. CROSS... **NO PLAN** IS NEEDED BADLY!



RIGHT! BUT THE AMOUNT TAKEN IN AT **THIS** CENTER DOES NOT JUSTIFY THE EXPENSE OF KEEPING IT **OPEN!** THAT IS THE PURPOSE OF **THIS** MEETING... TO DISCUSS WAYS AND MEANS OF **INCREASING** DONATIONS SO WE CAN REMAIN OPEN!

MR. DRINK LISTENS INTENTLY! MR. DRINK IS **FRIGHTENED!** IF THEY CLOSE THE CENTER, HE'LL BE OUT OF A JOB...

AND I'D HAVE TO GO BACK TO DOING WHAT I DID LAST NIGHT! **KILLING... UGH...**



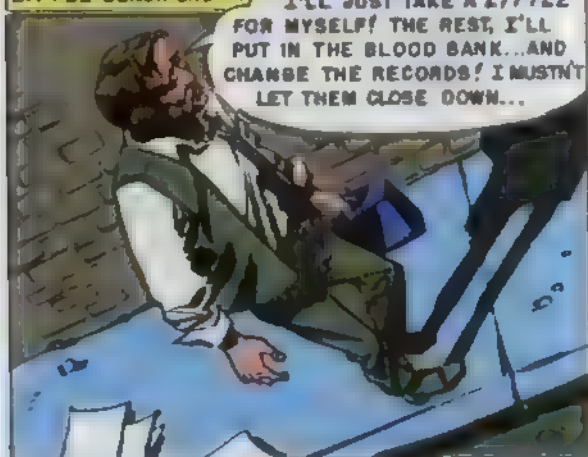
AND THEN MR. DRINK HAS A DESPERATE PLAN! A PLAN TO KEEP THE CENTER OPERATING...

WHY **NOT?** IT WILL ONLY BE FOR A **WHILE**... UNTIL THE HOME OFFICE COOLS OFF...



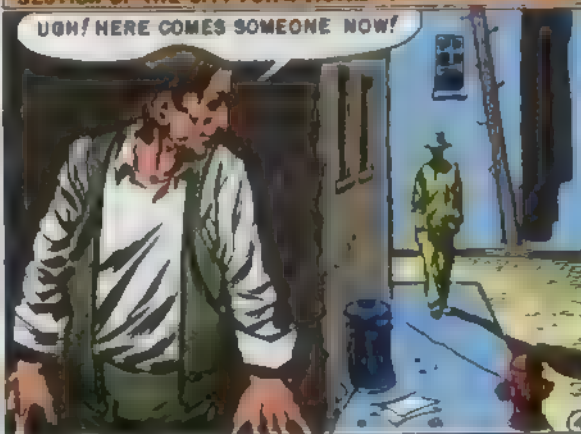
SO, THAT NIGHT, MR. DRINK GOES OUT AGAIN WITH THE LITTLE BLACK BAG

I'LL JUST TAKE A **LITTLE** FOR MYSELF! THE REST, I'LL PUT IN THE BLOOD BANK... AND CHANGE THE RECORDS! I MUSTN'T LET THEM CLOSE DOWN...



AND SO, AGAIN, MR. DRINK WAITS IN A DESERTED SECTION OF THE CITY FOR A VICTIM

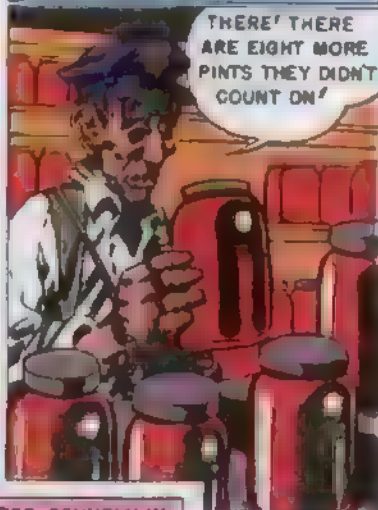
UGH! HERE COMES SOMEONE NOW!



AND ONCE MORE, THE NIGHT IS
PIERCED BY THE SCREAM OF A
DYING SOUL...

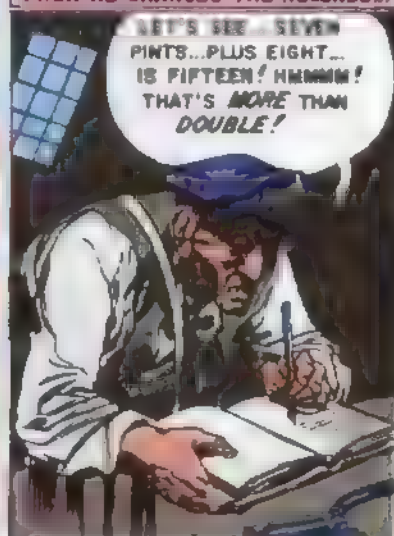


THEN MR. DRINK RETURNS TO THE
BLOOD-DONOR CENTER AND...



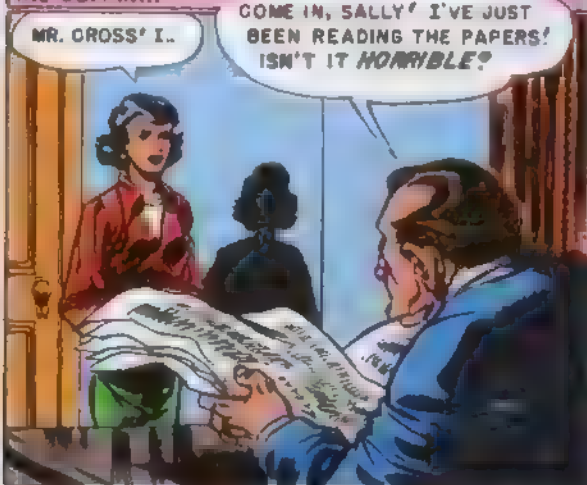
THERE! THERE
ARE EIGHT MORE
PINTS THEY DIDN'T
COUNT ON!

THEN HE CHANGES THE RECORDS...



LET'S SEE... SEVEN
PINTS... PLUS EIGHT...
IS FIFTEEN! HMMMM!
THAT'S MORE THAN
DOUBLE!

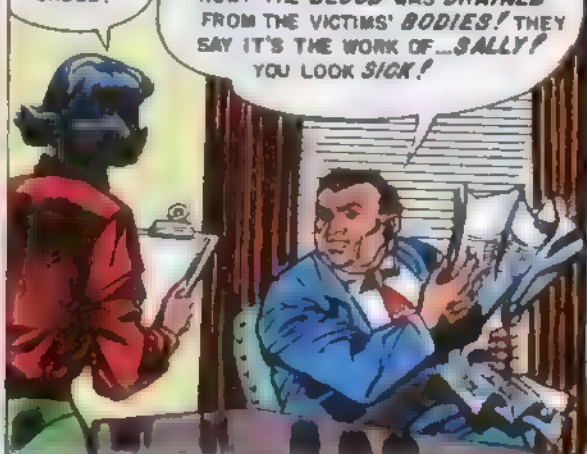
THE NEXT DAY, WHILE MR. DRINK SLEEPS SOUNDLY IN
HIS COFFIN...



MR. CROSS! I...

COME IN, SALLY! I'VE JUST
BEEN READING THE PAPERS!
ISN'T IT HORRIBLE?

WHAT, MR.
CROSS?



WHY, THE MURDERS! TWO IN A
ROW! THE BLOOD WAS DRAINED
FROM THE VICTIMS' BODIES! THEY
SAY IT'S THE WORK OF... SALLY!
YOU LOOK SICK!

THAT NIGHT MR. DRINK SEARCHES THE CITY FOR
ANOTHER VICTIM...



OUGH! HOW I HATE THIS! BUT...
IT'S GOT TO BE THIS WAY FOR
A WHILE IF I DON'T WANT TO
DO THIS ALL THE TIME...

...AND AGAIN THE BLOOD-BANK HAS SEVERAL
EXTRA DONATIONS...



EIGHT PINTS TODAY... PLUS
MY NINE MAKES SEVENTEEN!
WE'RE IMPROVING!

THE POLICE ARE BAFFLED ..

THAT'S THE FIFTH MURDER IN A WEEK! AND EVERY ONE OF THE VICTIMS DRAINED OF THEIR BLOOD! I TELL YOU THERE'S A **VAMPIRE** LOOSE...



THE HOME OFFICE IS AMAZED...

ACTUALLY **DOUBLED** I'LL CONTACT THE ARMY!
THEIR PREVIOUS RECORDS! THE DIRECTOR, THERE, DESERVES A **NEDAL!**



THE ARMY IS PLEASED...

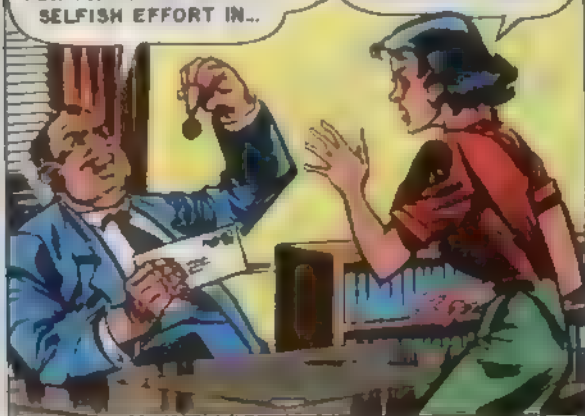
FOR HIS PATRIOTIC WORK IN INCREASING HIS CENTER'S BLOOD INTAKE BY ONE HUNDRED PERCENT, THE ARMY AUTHORIZES THAT MR. CHRISTOPHER CROSS BE AWARDED...



AND SO...

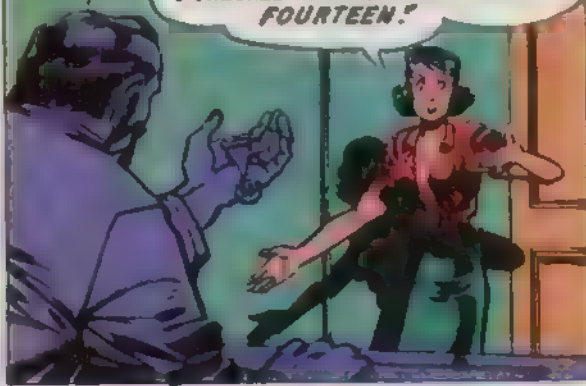
LOOK SALLY! THEY SENT IT TO ME! A MEDAL.. FOR PATRIOTIC AND UN-SELFISH EFFORT IN...

MR. CROSS! THERE'S BEEN **ANOTHER MURDER**... AND...



WELL, CHILD! WHAT IS IT? SPEAK UP!

TWO NIGHTS AGO, BEFORE I WENT HOME, I CHECKED THE DAY'S DONATIONS! THERE WERE **FIVE PINTS**! THE NEXT MORNING WHEN I CHECKED AGAIN, THERE WERE **FOURTEEN!**



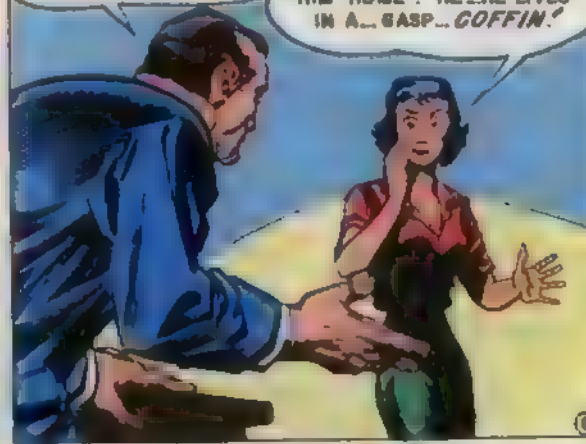
YOU MEAN...

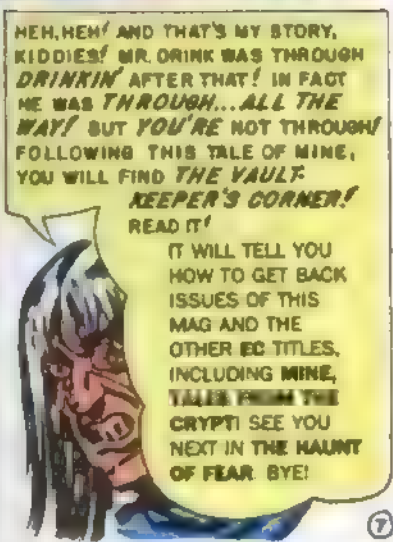
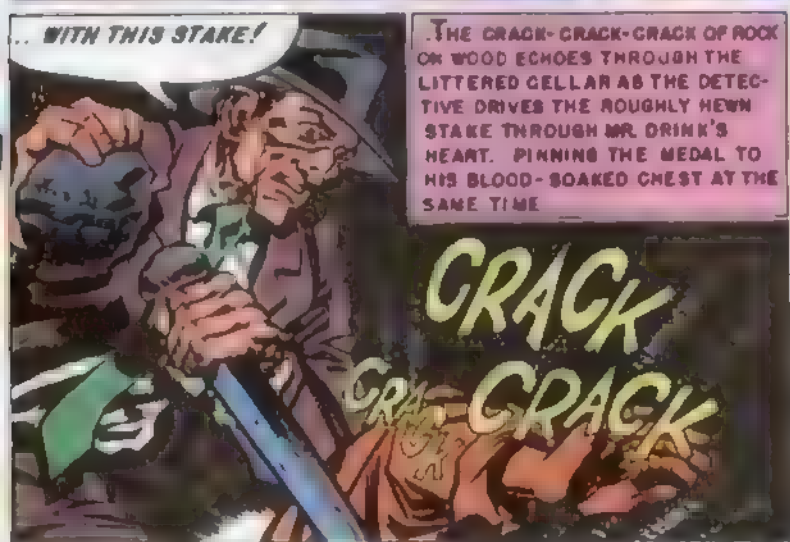
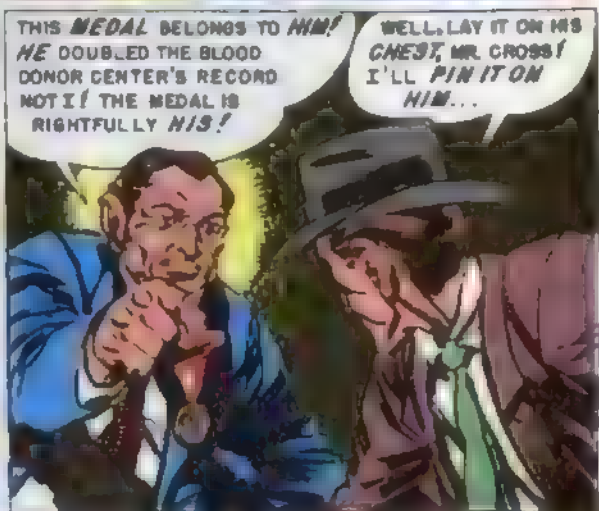
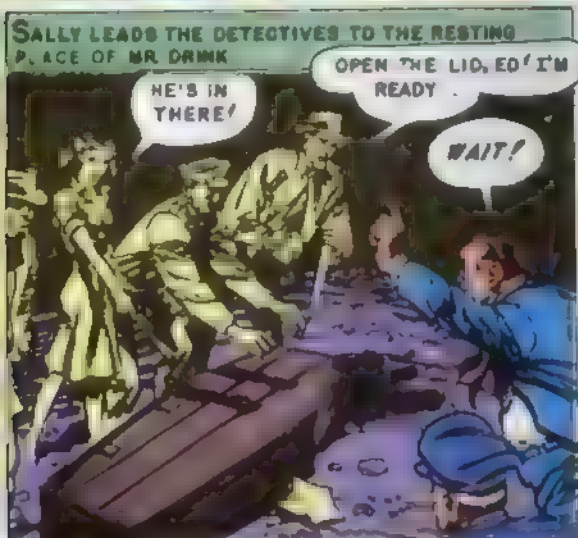
THE VAMPIRE THAT HAS BEEN KILLING THOSE POOR PEOPLE AND DRAINING THEIR BLOOD, BRINGS IT **HERE!**



BUT, MR DRINK, THE NIGHT WATCHMAN, WOULD HAVE...

MR DRINK IS THE **VAMPIRE!** THIS MORNING I FOLLOWED HIM 'HOME'! HE... HE LIVES IN A... GASP... **COFFIN!**







THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER

President and CEO—Stephen A. Gappi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Russ,

I have to say that I am a bit surprised at Dave Hall's statement in VAULT #6 that nobody "can imagine what in the world" ["The Raven"] is supposed to be about. I would suggest reading Poe's own essay "The Philosophy of Composition" (1848). However, some students of the master think that the explanation given is a little disingenuous, along the lines of "The Balloon Hoax."

It is interesting that Dave goes back to ancient Rome to find a source for the poem. Try the article "The Raven and the Raven" by Joseph Jones in AMERICAN LITERATURE Volume 31 (1960). I still have my handwritten notes on that one from my academic days. There is also a piece titled "The Raven, The Parrot and the Pigeon" in the small press publication FANTASY MACABRE #11 (1988) "Sweeney among the Nightingales" by T.S. Eliot, now that's one nobody can figure out.

On the subject of zombies the classic work is "The Magic Island" by William Seabrook (1929). More recent and probably more authoritative is "The Serpent and the Rainbow" by Harvard ethnobotanist Wade Davis (1985). The movie of the same name (1988), directed by Wes Craven, is loosely based on the book. Davis followed up with "Passage of Darkness—The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie." The best fictional collection (in fact the only) I have seen is "Stories of the Walking Dead" (1985), one of the many anthologies edited by Peter Haining.

And since no one else has mentioned it, "The Grave Wager" in VAULT #5 is adapted from the short piece "A Watcher by the Dead" by Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914?), another American writer of weird tales well worth reading.

Finally, I thought that I was seeing things when I read "Till Death Do Us Part" drawn by Vic Carrabetta in CURSE OF THE WEIRD #3. I was, too, a lot of Johnny Craig artwork. Marvel admitted the Wally Wood swipes but not the Craig. Imagine mixing atomic bombs, murderous bookkeepers and voodoo. Even the title sounded familiar.

Mark A. Bernstein Jersey City, NJ

Ethnobotanist? You're just making that up! —VK

Dear CK, OW, VK, and Russ,

CK and OW told us how they were born. But I want to see how VK was born, so if you can please reprint that issue I will be very thankful. Also, how can I get another form to have a 6 issue subscription?

Chazmond Peacock Brooklyn, NY

You may call me Chazle.

And you can call me—Mr. The Vault Keeper, Eiri Hek, heh! Jee! kidding!

As I will be called upon to mention for eternity, I guess, EC never printed an origin story for me.

You need no special form to subscribe, merely money! Write the specifics (name, address, what you want) on any old death certificate or scrap of shroud and send it in. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I am 10 years old. I think your comics are so exciting I read them in the dark with a flashlight. I just got done reading

"The Mask of Horror" in VAULT 7. It was real scary. I've always wondered why the Crypt-Keeper gets his own show when you don't. That stinks. Your stories are way better. I like X-MEN books but your stories are the best. Could you pretty please write back. If you do you'd be ~~gimme lines too.~~

Matthew Smith Utica, NY

I'm so cool, M&Ms won't melt in my mouth. But I can't handily write back.

Remember, you get four complete stories in an EC comic, but the X-Men go on forever and ever and ever... —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Hi. I am 10 years old. I have been a big fan since I was 8. I've been collecting CRYPT, VAULT and HAUNT. I have all of them except for CRYPT #1. I never had a chance to get it.

Stephen Leopold Gardener, NY

Au contraire, mes ami! You can still get a copy of any of our back issues of anything. Check the end of this column for the info on back issue 32-pagers. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

My favorite stories are "Werewolf Concerto!", "Fitting Punishment!", "The Grave Wager", "Escape!" and "The Mask of Horror". Great job on VAULT #7. Please print my address, I love to have pencils. I am 12 years old.

Dara Conner 7927 Rambler PL Cincinnati, OH 45231

You mention stories from several back issues. All back issues are available; see the note at the end of this column. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Is Mrs. Thaumaturge your twin sister in VAULT 8 "Daddy Lost His Head!"? It certainly looks like it.

I come from England, and in England we don't get the HBO television series "Tales from the Crypt." If you could please tell me if I could buy the HBO series on video I would be most grateful. One magazine said that some of the series are available to buy already, and that CK, OW and VK are soon to be made into figures. Is this true? I hope so.

Oliver Wingrave Surrey, ENGLAND

Mrs. Thaumaturge (look it up!) has one of those Roman noses—it's roman down towards her chin! Now, which Ghoulunatic does that remind you of? Hm?

The figure they are talking of making me into is: ♀. How do you pronounce it? Ask ♀!

We don't know the specifics on availability of HBO "Tales from the Crypt" videos; clue us in, hip-Brits. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Did you know that you rule? Those clowns The Crypt-Keeper and The Old Witch [have told] how they were born, but can you tell me how you were born? You've been

keeping it a secret for a long time. Isn't it about time you tell somebody before it's too late?

I like your stories very much, but the Crypt-Keeper keeps stealing them

Bryan Kortle North Beach, MD

I rule, and the anonymous editor rules the borders! It's been so long since I "originated," I'm not sure I remember it right, myself! —VK

Dear VK,

I think your comics are cool. Can you write a comic about zombies? I have been begging my dad to take me to the comic store to buy more VAULT comics

Adam Zacc Downers Grove, IL

No true zombies (as opposed to mere re-animated corpses—except no substitutes!) in the immediate future, tho CK has some pseudo-zedoo in CRYPT 10 soon-to-come.

Hey, let's write a brand-new zombie tale! I've already got a title: "Ain't Got Nothin' Zombie!" —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I recently became an EC fan when I got VAULT #6. It was really good. I loved Graham Ingels' art in "Dying to Lose Weight!" The only story that wasn't quite as scary as the rest was "The Mask of Horror".

David Lowery Irving, TX

Those stories are in VAULT 7. The scariest thing about "Mask" is the pledging of mutual 'want' after a single evening's acquaintance! Maybe that's how he got into his crummy marriage in the first place! —VK

Dear VK,

I love issue #7! My favorite stories were "Land Me a Hand!" and "Sink-Hole!" The pictures were great (especially the dead guys!) I kept thinking zombies were going to jump at me after I read "Sink-Hole"! I love being scared!

Adam Townsend, age 10 Winterville, OH

Greet, Adam! Glad we left you jumpy. But, like we warned above, don't confuse a re-animated dead guy with a real zombie! You might just jump the wrong way! —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Wow! VAULT #7 is truly a masterpiece. Every story was great, but my favorite was "Sink-Hole". When Shirley hit Aldous with that frying pan I winced from the blow! In fact my head still hurts whenever I look at that story.

VAULT is my favorite comic book now, I can hardly stand the wait between issues! Thanks a million for sharing your fetid fables with us. Vault-Keeper! Your devoted fan,

Jim Davis Pullman, WA

"KLANG!"

—VK



WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Wendy Strickland
Morty Ellis
Brian D. Jeffrey
George D. Kalya
Jason Kennedy
Cory Meese
Joe Mascetti
B. Miller
Bruno Moskal
Heath Pook
Mike Rogers
Chris Schilling
Dave Szurek
Frederic Verdy
Nick Verdy

I can't read it, NY
Stendale, AZ
Mobile, AL
Aloha, OH
Hartford, CT
Elkton, MD
Baltimore, MD
Sandy, UT
Belwood, NJ
Nashville, TN
Toll City, IN
Allentown, OH
Aberdeen, WA
Ottumwa, IA
CANADA



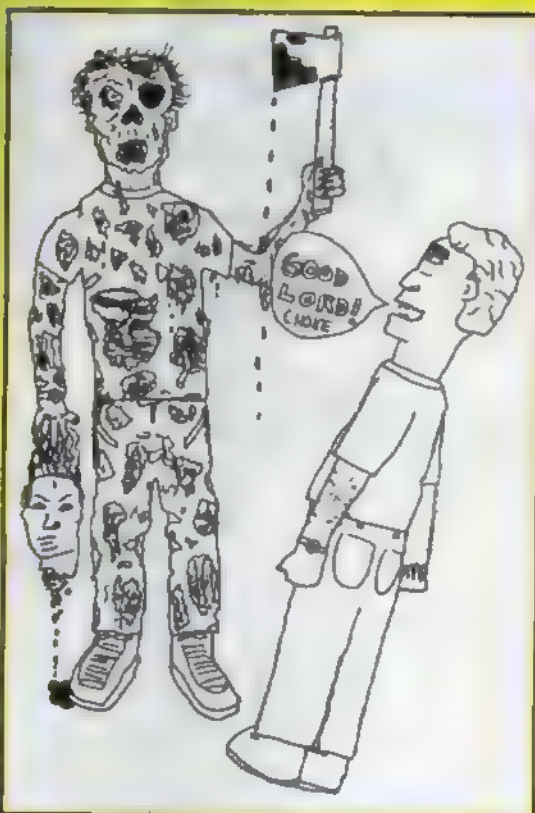
Dear VK,

Just got some back issues in the mail and I gotta say VAULT 6 was the best! "Terror on the Moon!" and "Baby...It's Cold Inside!" were by far my favorites. I have all the 64-page reprints and I plan on buying all the 32-pagers also

Your mag is my favorite among the horror comics but I also like the others. Got a drawing here to hang in your vault! Keep up the gory work!

Nathan Little Montgomery, AL

Sometimes I hang the art, sometimes I hang the artist. This time, you were lucky. For future reference, what's your collar size? —VK



NATHAN'S DRAWING

Also available this month are WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED TALES. Watch for HAUNT, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY and CRIME next month. Don't forget CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic!)

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1 (subject to availability), \$3 each. All others up thru issue #3, \$1.50 each. Issues #4 and up, \$2 each. Add \$5 per order (\$10 outside US) for S&H.

We want MORE letters! Write to:

VAULT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469

WHEAT RIDGE, CO 80036

THIS COMIC REPRINTS

VAULT OF HORROR #20 (#9, AUG/SEP 51)

COVER by Johnny Craig

"About Face!"

"The Reluctant Vampire!"

"Grandma's Ghost!"

"Revenge Is the Nuts!"

Johnny Craig

Jack Davis

Jack Kamen

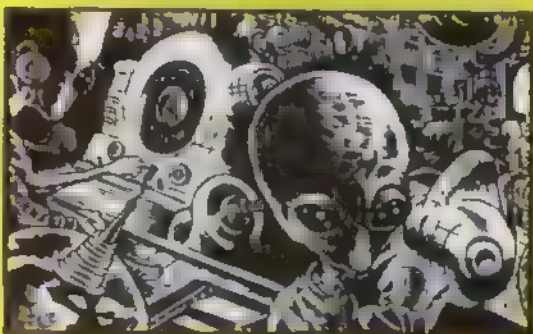
Graham Ingels

We welcome letters or comments. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically enclose street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. To do so we need your address on the individual letter.



AN OLD friend of ours set for this moody monster pic from the pen (ballpoint?) of Jessica Beebe, ST Louis, MO. And that's how I start off this special coming-of-age edition of THE CRYPT KEEPER's PAGE OF...

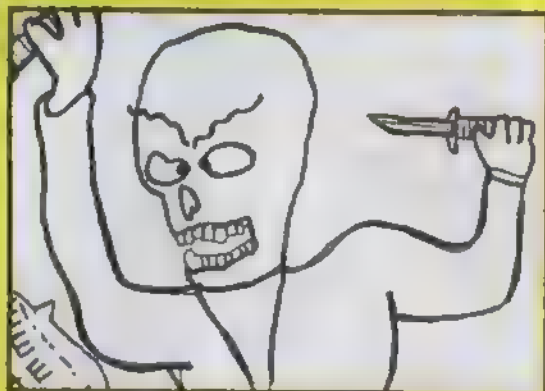
FINE ARTS #21



AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL etching from the spacy stylus of Sammy Stewart of Fairfield, IL. Or, as Sammy says:

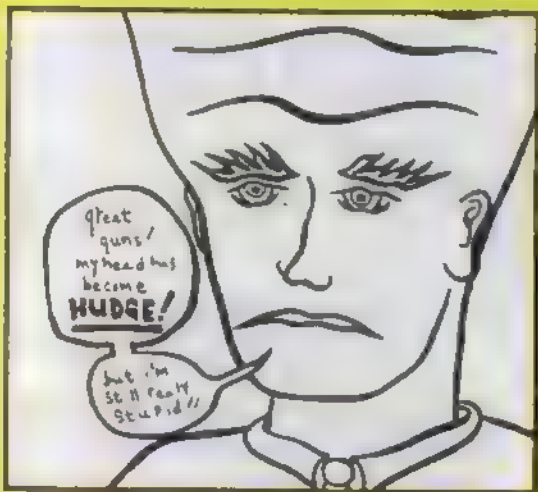
Here [is a] drawing of UFO occupants. I am illustrating a UFO book. The art of Wally Wood has always been my ideal

Wally Wood didn't do a tremendous number of EC horror stories, but I forgive him because his SF was so good! —CK



"VAULT-KEEPER RULES!" says Matthew Smith, Utica, NY, of the grotesque countenance above. Maybe this is what the video version of Ol' VK would look like if the TV guys had decided to do "Teles from the Vault." Below, what the TV guys would look like as deliciously depicted by William Pearson, Rutland, VT!

—CK



'HUDGE' THANKS to Arton, Groton, NY for this think-piece, a guy who's head was too big for the panel! Are you sure you didn't swipe this from the cover of the October 1965 issue of DC's MYSTERY ADJACENT TO SPACE? —CK

Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, legible doublespaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit!) to:

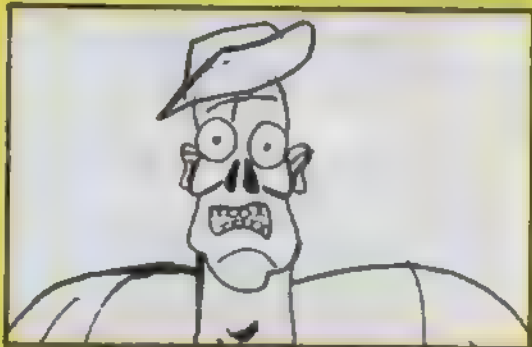
THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF FINE ARTS

MIKE COCHRAN

POB 443

WEST PLAINS, MO 65778

We welcome contributions. We cannot promise to return, acknowledge or publish contributions. We edit for clarity, accuracy and style. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication, to do so we need your address on the individual contribution.





Here's a chilling tale about
little Peggy and her...

GRANDMA'S GHOST!!



PEGGY SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN HER BED AND STARED INTO THE DARKNESS! IT CAME AGAIN - AN UNMISTAKABLE CRY OF PAIN

AAAAAAH!
HELP... ME...

GRANDMA!



PEGGY SWEEPED HER COVERS ASIDE AND PUSHED HER TINY FEET INTO THE FLURRY SLIPPERS THAT STOOD AT ATTENT ON BENEATH HER BED

IT'S GRANDMA! SHE'S HAVING
ANOTHER ATTACK!



OUT OF HER GAYLY DECORATED ROOM... DOWN THE LONG ELABORATELY FURNISHED CORRIDOR... INTO HER GRANDMOTHER'S BED ROOM, THE TERRIFIED LITTLE GIRL RUSHED...

PEGGY, DEAR GRANDMA! GASP. HELP ME! MY PILLS... ON THE NIGHT-TABLE

PEGGY, HER EYES FILLING WITH TEARS, PULLED THE FAMILIAR STRING THAT LIT GRANDMA'S NIGHT-TABLE LAMP...

HURRY DEAR GIVE ME TWO AND SOME WATER...

THEY. THEY'RE NOT HERE, GRANDMA!

THEY MUST BE THERE! THEY MUST BE! LOOK FOR THEM GASP

THEY'RE NOT ON THE FLOOR, EITHER.

PEGGY SCURRIED ABOUT HER GRANDMOTHER'S ROOM, TRYING TO KEEP HERSELF FROM CRYING, AS SHE SEARCHED FOR THE LITTLE AMBER-COLORED GLASS BOTTLE WITH THE YELLOW CAPSULES...

I... I CAN'T FIND IT, GRANNY! I CAN'T! I'LL GO GET UNCLE LAWRENCE...

DON'T BOTHER, PEGGY! THEY WENT OUT... EARLIER! COME HERE CHILD!

PEGGY EDGED TOWARD HER GRANDMOTHER'S BED! THE OLD WOMAN WRITHED IN PAIN, BUT AS THE SOBBING CHILD DREW NEAR, SHE MANAGED A WEAK SMILE...

I'M GOING TO... HAVE TO GO AWAY PEGGY, DEAR! I MAY NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!

DON'T LEAVE ME, GRANNY! DON'T LEAVE ME WITH UNCLE LAWRENCE AND AUNT HELEN! TAKE ME WITH YOU

I... I CAN'T CHILD! I DON'T WANT TO GO... BUT I MUST... GASP. SIGH...

GRANNY! GRANNY! WAKE UP, GRANNY!

PEGGY TURNED FROM HER GRANDMOTHER'S CHALK-WHITE FACE AND TIP-TOED FROM THE ROOM! GRANDMA IS ASLEEP! SHE THOUGHT! SHE LOOKED INTO HER AUNT AND UNCLE'S ROOM AS SHE PASSED! IT STOOD ON THE DRESSER AMONG HER AUNT'S PERFUME BOTTLES

THE BOTTLE OF PILLS! GRANDMA'S PILLS!

PEGGY CLUTCHED THE PILLS IN HER TINY FIST AS SHE RAN BACK TO HER GRANDMOTHER'S ROOM! SHE SHOOK HER ROUGHLY...

WAKE UP, GRANNY!
WAKE UP! I FOUND THE PILLS!
AUNT HELEN HAD THEM... IN HER
ROOM! WAKE UP! CAN'T YOU
HEAR ME?



NO SOUND CAME FROM THE WAXEN FACE OF THE OLD WOMAN! SHE WAS... IN FACT... **VERY DEAD!** PEGGY DIDN'T KNOW! SHE WAS TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND! SHE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY PUT GRANNY IN A BLACK BOX, EITHER... OR WHY THEY BURIED HER DEEP IN THE SOFT EARTH OF THE CEMETERY! AND, MOST OF ALL... SHE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY HER GRANDMA'S PILL BOTTLE HAPPENED TO BE IN HER AUNT AND UNCLE'S ROOM.



AFTER THE FUNERAL, PEGGY'S AUNT AND UNCLE DRANK A TOAST...

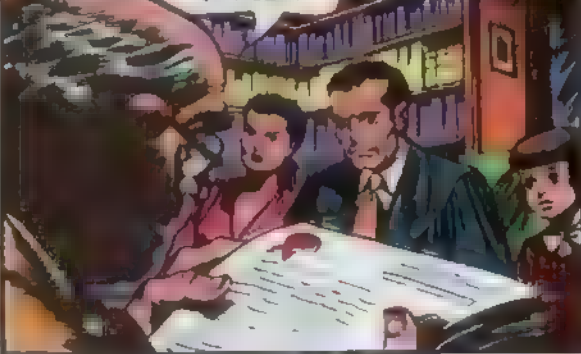
WELL,
LARRY! THE OLD GAL'S DOUGH
WILL BE OURS SOON...

AS SOON AS THE
WILL IS READ!



BUT AUNT HELEN AND UNCLE LARRY WERE IN FOR A SHOCK...

AND SO I, NABEL BRITT, LEAVE MY ENTIRE FORTUNE TO MY GRANDDAUGHTER, PEGGY BRITT. TO BE TURNED OVER TO HER WHEN SHE REACHES TWENTY YEARS OF AGE.



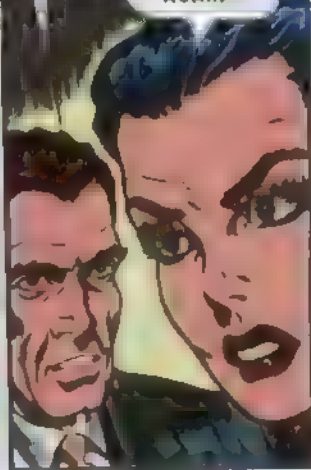
PEGGY MISSED HER GRANDMA VERY MUCH! SHE LONGED FOR AFFECTION! HER AUNT HELEN AND UNCLE LARRY DIDN'T GIVE IT TO HER! THEY SEEMED TO ~~REJECT~~ HER...

EXACTLY! WHERE
IS SHE?

SHE'S WITH
THAT CURSED
GARDENER
AGAIN

IT'LL BE EASY! WITH THE
BRAT OUT OF THE WAY,
THE FORTUNE WILL BE
OURS!

YOU
MEAN...
KILL
HER!

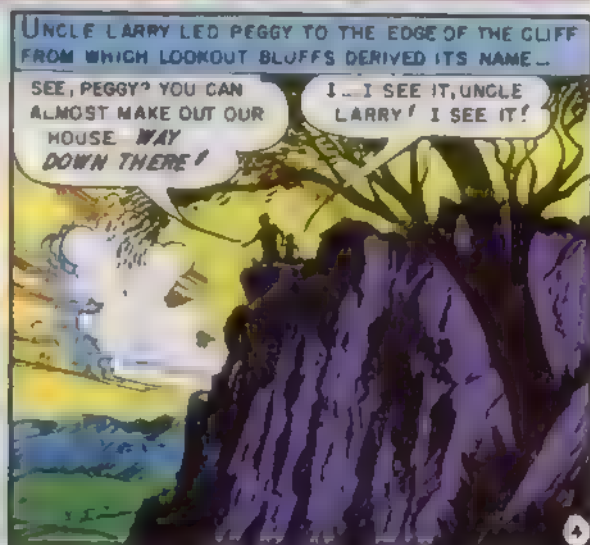
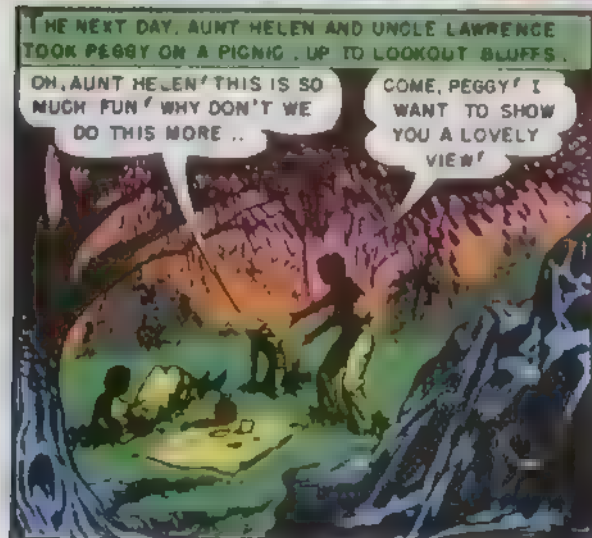
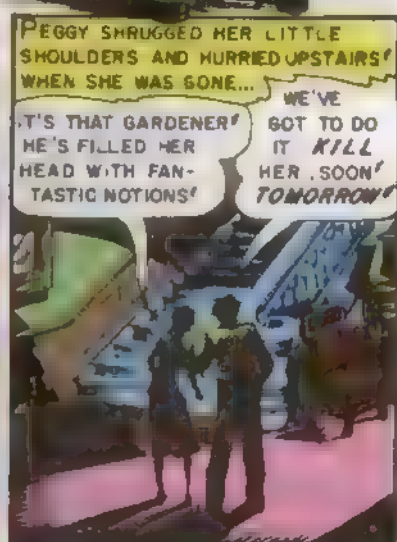
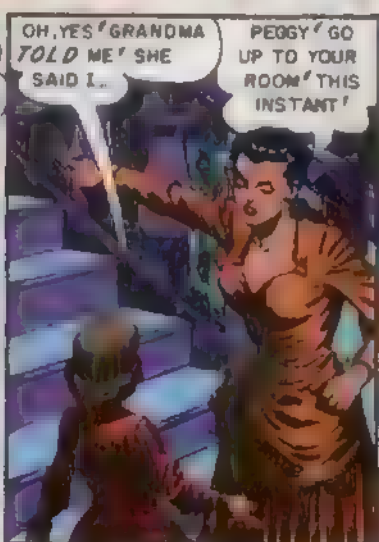


YES! PEGGY HAD FOUND A SUBSTITUTE FOR HER DEPARTED GRANDMOTHER ALEX BATES, THE FAMILY GARDENER...

OH, ALEX! YOU'RE SO
FUNNY! TELL ME
MORE!

SO, THE
LITTLE BEAR
STUCK HIS
PAW WAY
DOWN INTO
THE BEE-
HIVE...





NUN!

PEGGY TURNED AS IF SOMEONE
HAD CALLED HER' SHE MOVED
TOWARD AN INVISIBLE SOMETHING
THAT BELONGED TO HER

OH, GRANNY!
YOU CAME ON
OUR PICNIC,
TOO!

UNCLE LARRY'S LUNGE HAD BEEN A
SPLIT SECOND TOO LATE HE PUSHED
FORWARD OUT OVER THE EDGE OF
THE CLIFF AND HURLED DOWNWARD
TOWARD THE JAGGED ROCKS 400-
HUNDRED FEET BELOW

A
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THEY BURIED WHAT WAS LEFT OF UNCLE LARRY IN THE GRAVE NEXT TO PEGGY'S GRANDMA' NO ONE LISTENED TO PEGGY WHEN SHE TOLD WHAT HAD HAPPENED' NO ONE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT HER GRANDMOTHER' NO ONE...EXCEPT ALEX BATES...

AND THEN GRANDMA CALLED ME SHE
REACHED OUT HER HAND AND I WENT
TO HER AND UNCLE LARRY SCREAMED
AS HE FELL

I..I SEE

BUT, IN HER BLACK MOURNING CLOTHES, PEGGY'S, AUNT HELEN UNDERSTOOD ONLY ONE THING...

NOW THAT LARRY'S OUT
OF THE WAY, THE MONEY
WILL BE MINE. ALL MINE!

YES' AUNT HELEN HAD MADE UP HER MIND' SHE
WOULD GO THROUGH WITH THE ORIGINAL PLAN' SHE
WOULD DO AWAY WITH SWEET, FRAIL PEGGY.

WHERE HAVE
YOU BEEN?

I...I WENT TO
SEE ALEX!

AUNT HELEN SNATCHED PEGGY'S ARM AND PULLED HER
ROUGHLY TO THE CELLAR' HER PLAN WAS SIMPLE 'THE
FURNACE WOULD LEAVE NO TRACE' SHE SHOWED THE
STRUGGLING CHILD TOWARD IT...

AUNT HELEN!
WHAT ARE YOU
GOING TO DO
TO ME? YES

YOU'LL SEE.
YOU LITTLE
BRAT!

AUNT HELEN SWUNG OPEN THE HUGE FURNACE DOOR AND A BLAST OF HEAT SEARED FORTH! THE LEAPING FLAMES REACHED OUTWARD LIKE CLUTCHING FINGERS.

LET ME GO!
LET ME GO!

DON'T TRY TO GET
AWAY, PEGGY! I'M MUCH
TOO STRONG FOR YOU!
I-I...



SUDDENLY, AUNT HELEN'S GRIP ON PEGGY'S ARM RELAXED! PEGGY TURNED, FOLLOWING HER AUNT'S TERRIFIED GAZE...

GRANDMA! OH, GRANDMA
YOU'RE JUST IN TIME!

OH, MY... GOD!



AUNT HELEN BACKED AWAY! THE BLOOD DRAINED FROM HER FACE! HER EYES WERE WIDE IN HORROR...

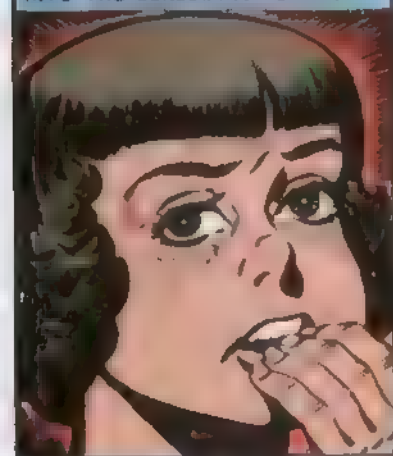
NO... NO... NO!



THE FLAMES LICKED AT HER BACK AS SHE COVERED TOWARDS THE FURNACE'S YAWNING DOORWAY...



PEGGY WATCHED AS HER AUNT'S BODY WAS LIFTED AND THRUST INTO THE CONSUMING FLAMES



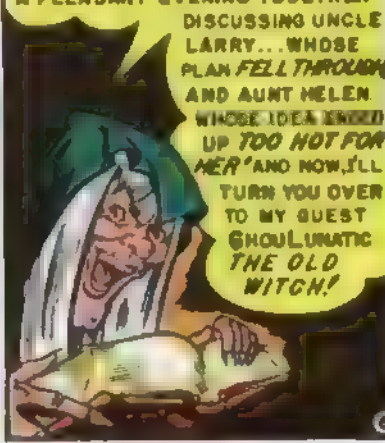
THE SMALL FRAIL CHILD STOOD SILENTLY AS HER AUNT'S SHRIEKING DIED IN A CHOKING RATTLE! SHE LISTENED INTENTLY AND THEN LEFT THE CELLAR! SHE MADE HER WAY SLOWLY TO THE GARDENER'S COTTAGE! ALEX LISTENED TO HER INCREDIBLE STORY...

AND THEN GRANDMA
SAID SHE WAS GOING AWAY
FOR GOOD... THAT YOU'D
TAKE CARE OF ME FROM
NOW ON!



HEH, HEH! WELL, THAT'S IT, KIDDIES! PEGGY'S HAPPY NOW WITH NICE OLD ALEX BATES! THEY SPEND MANY A PLEASANT EVENING TOGETHER

DISCUSSING UNCLE LARRY... WHOSE PLAN FELL THROUGH! AND AUNT HELEN WHOSE IDEA ENDED UP TOO HOT FOR HER! AND NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO MY GUEST SNOULUNATIC THE OLD WITCH!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! I SEE BY YOUR LEERING FACES THAT YOU ARE EAGERLY AWAITING ANOTHER OF MY DELICIOUS HORROR-SERVINGS! WELL, YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED! THE FIRE IS LEAPING AND CRACKLING AROUND MY CAULDRON, AND ITS EVIL BREW IS BUBBLING AND STEAMING! SO COME CLOSER, WHERE YOU CAN INHALE THE FOUL-SMELLING AROMAS... AND YOUR HOSTESS, *THE OLD WITCH*, MISTRESS OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR, WILL DISH OUT A TASTY TALE OF TERROR CALLED...

REVENGE IS THE NUTS!



IT STOOD LIKE A HUGE TOMB IN THE DRAB, CEMETERY-LIKE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE! THE IVY THAT CLUNG TO ITS WEATHERED GREY WALLS CURLED LIKE SERPENTS ABOUT THE IRON BARS SET IN EACH WINDOW! IT WAS A FAMILIAR BUILDING TO THE PASSERS-BY! AT TIMES, IF ONE LISTENED, THE ANGUISHED SCREAMS AND HYSTERICAL RAVINGS OF THE 'INMATES' COULD BE HEARD! THE IRON SIGN OVER THE GATES TOLD THE SOMBRE STRUCTURE'S IDENTITY... THE *CROYDON INSANE ASYLUM*...

HA-HA-HA-HA!

AAAAAAAAAAHH!



INSIDE THE MOLDY STONE WALLS, IN ONE WING OF THE ASYLUM, WAS THE OFFICE OF LYTHAM BLACKPOOL ... THE DOCTOR IN CHARGE OF CROYDON! AT HIS DESK SAT AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

GOOD GRIEF, BLACKPOOL! WHAT WAS THAT... THAT HORRIBLE SCREAM?

DO NOT BE ALARMED, MR ALDERSHOT! IT WAS ONLY ONE OF THE PATIENTS, PROBABLY HAVING A NIGHTMARE.

BUT DOWN IN THE DAMP DEPTHS OF CROYDON INSANE ASYLUM, THE PATIENT SCREAMED AGAIN! IT WAS NOT A NIGHTMARE THE POOR SOUL WAS EXPERIENCING, BUT THE STING OF A HORSEHIDE WHIP...

THAT'S ENOUGH, JEFFERS! YOU'LL KILL HIM... AND YOU KNOW WHAT BLACKPOOL SAID...

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL STOP! HE'S UNCONSCIOUS ANYWAY!

MEANWHILE, UPSTAIRS... IN LYTHAM BLACKPOOL'S OFFICE

IT IS THIS LETTER THAT HAS BROUGHT ME TO CROYDON, DOCTOR BLACKPOOL! A RELATIVE OF ONE OF THE PATIENTS HERE SENT IT TO ME! ITS CONTENTS SHOCKED ME!

SHOCKED YOU, MR ALDERSHOT?

YES! THE WRITER'S SON IS AN INMATE OF CROYDON! HE TOLD HIS MOTHER OF THE INHUMAN TREATMENT OF THE PATIENTS OF THIS INSTITUTION. SHE WRITES OF WHIPPING STARVATION UNSANITARY CONDITIONS...

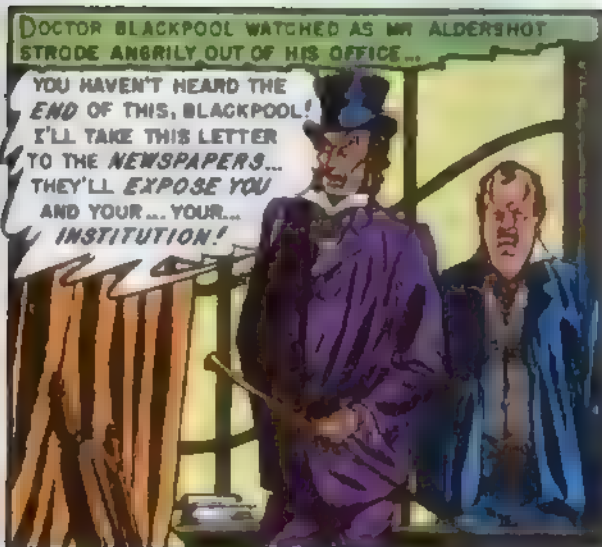
JUST A MOMENT, MR ALDERSHOT!

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IN THESE RADICALLY NEW IDEAS ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF THE INSANE OR NOT! I, FOR ONE, AS HEAD OF THIS INSTITUTION, FOLLOW THE ACCEPTED METHOD!

AN INSANE PERSON IS POSSESSED OF THE DEVIL... OR EVIL SPIRITS THAT CONTROL HIS MIND AND BODY! ONLY BY INFLICTING SEVERE PAIN UPON THE PATIENT CAN WE DRIVE THESE EVIL DEMONS FROM HIS BODY... AND THEREBY CURE HIM!

YOU'RE WRONG! IT'S CRUEL TO DO THAT TO THOSE POOR SOULS! INSANITY IS A SICKNESS!

MR ALDERSHOT! THIS INTERVIEW IS AT AN END! GOOD-DAY!



DOCTOR BLACKPOOL WATCHED AS MR. ALDERSHOT STRODE ANGRILY OUT OF HIS OFFICE...

YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE END OF THIS, BLACKPOOL! I'LL TAKE THIS LETTER TO THE NEWSPAPERS... THEY'LL EXPOSE YOU AND YOUR... YOUR... INSTITUTION!

AFTER MR. ALDERSHOT LEFT, DOCTOR BLACKPOOL MADE HIS WAY DOWN THE STONE STEPS THAT LED TO THE DUNGEONS OF CROYDON! HE MOTIONED TO THE GUARD TO UNLOCK A DOOR! INSIDE, A YOUNG MAN LAY PROSTRATE ON THE STONE FLOOR... SOBBING...

I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED YOUR LESSON, MOULTON! NEXT TIME YOUR DEAR MOTHER VISITS YOU, DON'T COMPLAIN TO HER ABOUT HOW WE TREAT YOU...



DOCTOR BLACKPOOL TURNED AND LEFT THE DARK CELL.

ALL RIGHT, GUARD! YOU CAN TAKE HIM BACK TO THE WARD!

YES, DOCTOR!



AS DOCTOR BLACKPOOL'S FOOT- STEPS FADED AWAY

C'MON, MOULTON! THE DOC SAYS YOU CAN GO BACK TO THE WARD!

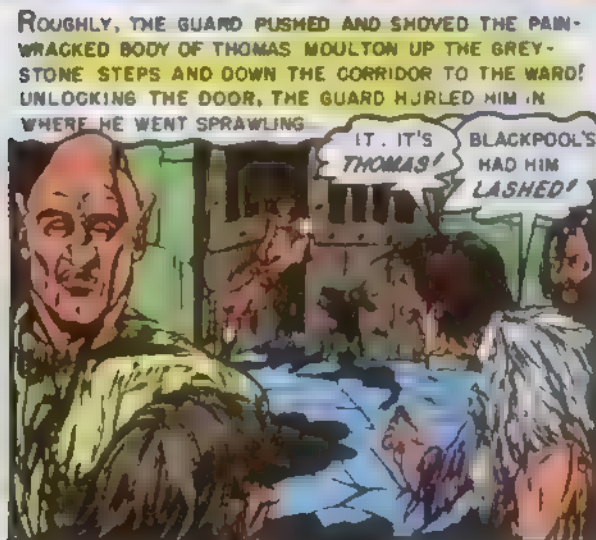
I... I CAN'T MOVE!



THE GUARD PULLED THE LASH- SCARRED YOUNG MAN TO HIS FEET! HE SCREAMED IN PAIN...

I SAID COME ON!

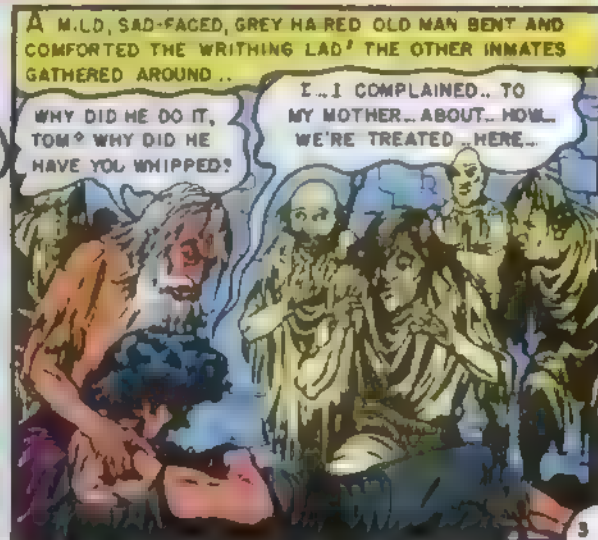
OWWWW! P-PLEASE... HAVE PITY...



ROUGHLY, THE GUARD PUSHED AND SHOVED THE PAIN- WRACKED BODY OF THOMAS MOULTON UP THE GREY- STONE STEPS AND DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO THE WARD! UNLOCKING THE DOOR, THE GUARD HURLED HIM IN WHERE HE WENT SPRAWLING

IT... IT'S THOMAS!

BLACKPOOL'S HAD HIM LASHED!



A MILD, SAD-FACED, GREY HA-RED OLD MAN BENT AND COMFORTED THE WRITHING LAD! THE OTHER INMATES GATHERED AROUND...

WHY DID HE DO IT, TOM? WHY DID HE HAVE YOU WHIPPED?

I... I COMPLAINED.. TO MY MOTHER... ABOUT... HOW... WE'RE TREATED... HERE...

BEYOND THE GROUP OF GATHERED INMATES STOOD A MONSTROUS MAN! HE STARED DUMBLY AT THEM... HIS FACE BLANK AND EXPRESSIONLESS.

HOW DID HE FIND OUT THAT YOU COMPLAINED, TOM?

MY MOTHER WROTE TO AN OLD FRIEND, ~~WHICH~~ WROTE TO BLACK-POOL FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS THE MATTER!

THE YOUNG MAN CLUTCHED AT THE GREY-HAIRED OLD MAN'S TATTERED CLOTHES...

WHY DO YOU STAY HERE, MISTER FORTNEY? YOU ARE NOT INSANE! WHY DON'T YOU MAKE YOUR FAMILY TAKE YOU OUT?

THEY DON'T WANT TO, SON! THEY PAY DOCTOR BLACKPOOL TO KEEP ME HERE...

AT THAT MOMENT, DOCTOR BLACKPOOL ENTERED THE BARE WARD...

GET UP, FORTNEY! LEAVE HIM ALONE!

I'M ONLY TRYING TO COMFORT HIM! YOU...

DOCTOR BLACKPOOL SWUNG OUT AT THE OLD MAN, STRIKING HIM ACROSS THE FACE.

I SAID... LEAVE HIM ALONE!

THE HUGE, DUMB-FACED INMATE WHO HAD BEEN STARING BLANKLY AT THE BRUTAL SCENE SUDDENLY MOVED FORWARD! HIS EYES WERE WIDE NOW... HIS MOUTH TWISTED IN AN ANGRY SNARL...

NO, OLAF! NO! I'M NOT HURT...

KEEP AWAY! KEEP AWAY, YOU OVERGROWN... GUARDS! GUARDS!

OLAF GRABBED AT THE DOCTOR WITH A HUGE FIST AND SAVAGELY SMASHED THE OTHER FIST INTO THE DOCTOR'S SCREAMING FACE

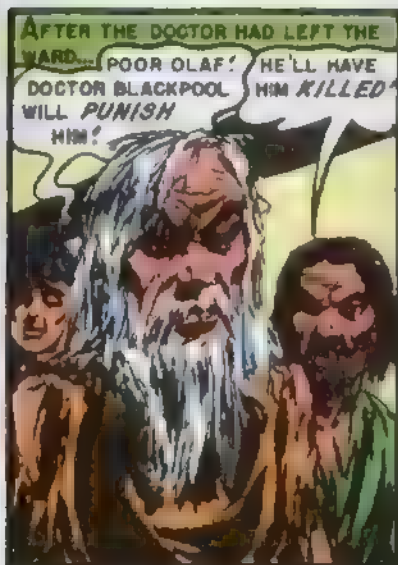
GUARDS! YAAAAAH!

STOP, OLAF! STOP!

THREE GUARDS BURST INTO THE WARD AND FINALLY DRAGGED THE SNARLING OLAF FROM THE COWERING DOCTOR...

PUT HIM... PUT HIM IN CHAINS! I'LL... I'LL DEAL WITH HIM LATER!

YES, SIR!



AFTER THE DOCTOR HAD LEFT THE WARD... POOR OLAF! HE'LL HAVE DOCTOR BLACKPOOL WILL PUNISH HIM!



THE OLD MAN SHOOK HIS HEAD... NO! THE DOCTOR WOULDN'T DO THAT! IT WOULD MEAN MONEY OUT OF HIS POCKET! FOR EVERY INMATE IN CROYDON, THE GOVERNMENT GIVES DOCTOR BLACKPOOL A SUM OF MONEY...



... WITH WHICH HE IS SUPPOSED TO FEED US PROPERLY... SEE THAT WE HAVE THE BEST OF CARE... CLEAN BEDS... CLEAN CLOTHES...

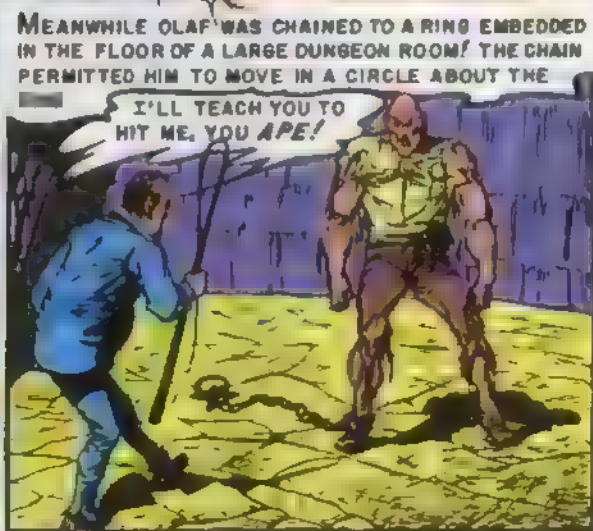
DON'T THEY GIVE HIM THE MONEY ANYMORE?



OF COURSE THEY DO, BUT HE POCKETS IT! INSTEAD OF GOOD FOOD, HE FEEDS US ROTTEN CONDEMNED MEAT! INSTEAD OF GLEAN BEDS... GLEAN CLOTHES... HE GIVES US... THIS!

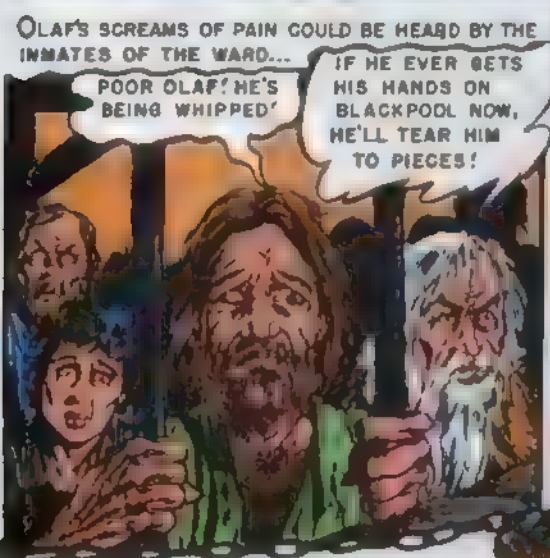
RAGS TO WEAR!

STRAW MATS TO SLEEP UPON!



MEANWHILE OLAF WAS CHAINED TO A RING EMBEDDED IN THE FLOOR OF A LARGE DUNGEON ROOM! THE CHAIN PERMITTED HIM TO MOVE IN A CIRCLE ABOUT THE

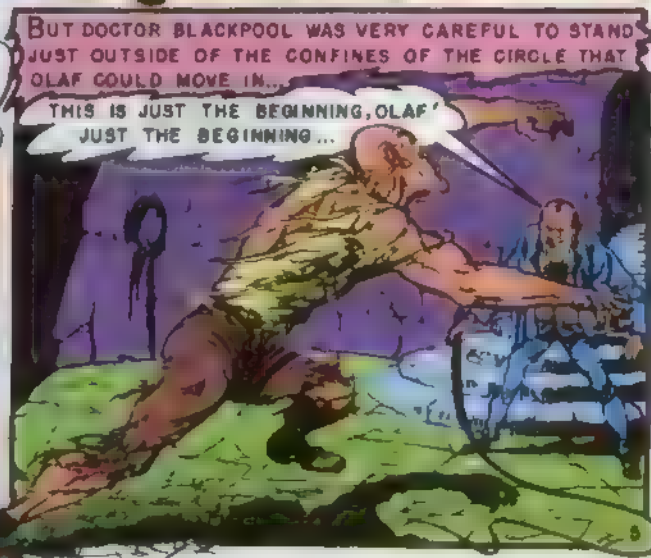
I'LL TEACH YOU TO HIT ME, YOU APE!



OLAF'S SCREAMS OF PAIN COULD BE HEARD BY THE INMATES OF THE WARD...

POOR OLAF! HE'S BEING WHIPPED!

IF HE EVER GETS HIS HANDS ON BLACKPOOL NOW, HE'LL TEAR HIM TO PIECES!



BUT DOCTOR BLACKPOOL WAS VERY CAREFUL TO STAND JUST OUTSIDE OF THE CONFINES OF THE CIRCLE THAT OLAF COULD MOVE IN...

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING, OLAF! JUST THE BEGINNING...

YES, KIDDIES! IT ~~WAS~~ JUST THE BEGINNING!
EACH DAY, DOCTOR BLACKPOOL VISITED OLAF
TO TEASE HIM... TAUNT HIM...

HUNGRY, OLAF? I'LL WAGER YOU'D
LIKE THIS FOOD, WOULDN'T YOU?
HERE... HAVE SOME...

DOCTOR BLACKWELL PUT THE TRAY OF FOOD JUST OUTSIDE
OF OLAF'S REACH...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, OLAF?
DON'T YOU WANT IT? AREN'T
YOU HUNGRY? HA, HA, HA, HA



SUMMER PASSED, AND WINTER
CAME TO CROYDON! COLD... COLD
WINTER! THE INMATES SHIVERED
IN THEIR SCANT RAGS...

THE FIRE'S DIED
OUT!

HE'S TOO
CHEAP TO
PROVIDE HEAT!



DOCTOR BLACKWELL CONTINUED
TO MISTREAT POOR OLAF...

WELL, OLAF? **THIRSTY?**
HERE'S A PITCHER OF
WATER FOR YOU!



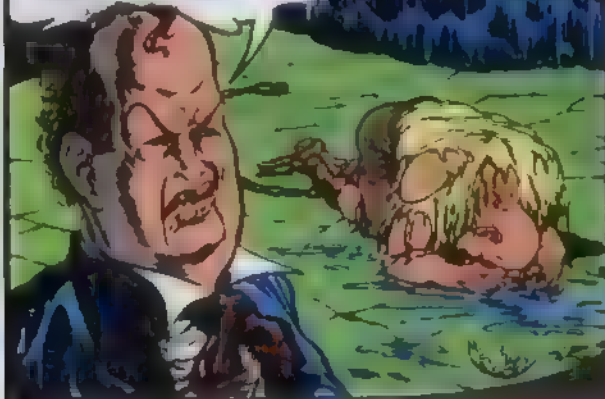
AS OLAF REACHED EAGERLY FOR
THE WATER... HIS PARCHED LIPS
QUIVERING...

OH, DEAR! THAT
WAS **CLUMSY** OF
ME!



AND WHILE OLAF FELL TO HIS KNEES TO SIP UP THE
SPILLED WATER FROM THE SMASHED PITCHER...

**DRINK IT, OLAF... DRINK IT
LIKE AN ANIMAL... THE
ANIMAL YOU ARE!**



IN THE WARD, OLD MILD, GREY-HAired MR. FORTNEY
PLEADED WITH THE OTHER INMATES

HE MUST BE PUNISHED! DOCTOR
BLACKPOOL MUST BE **PUNISHED**
FOR THIS..

HOW?
HOW?





THE OLD MAN OUTLINED HIS PLAN!
THEN... GUARD! QUICKLY!
MR. FORTNEY! HE'S DYING!

WHA...



THE GUARD UNLOCKED THE DOOR
AND APPROACHED THE OLD MAN
WHO LAY GASPING ON A STRAW
MAT! SUDDENLY...

LET GO OF ME,
YOU... YOU... CRAZY...
FOOLS!

HIS KEYS!
GET HIS
KEYS!



IN HIS OFFICE, DOCTOR BLACKPOOL
GLANCED UP FROM HIS DESK TO SEE...

YOU... ALL OF YOU!
HOW... HOW DID
YOU GET OUT?

GRAB
HIM!



THE GRIM-FACED INMATES CARRIED THE STRUGGLING,
SHRIEKING DOCTOR DOWN THE GREY-STONE STEPS THAT
LED TO THE DUNGEON ROOMS...

HURRY! DOWN
HERE!

LET ME GO!
LET ME GO!



THE DOOR TO OLAF'S ROOM WAS UNLOCKED, AND
ANXIOUS HANDS SHOVED DOCTOR BLACKPOOL IN...

LOOK, OLAF! LOOK
WHAT WE'VE
BROUGHT YOU!

NO! NO! NOT THAT...



THE SMILING... LAUGHING... CHATTERING INMATES STOOD AROUND THE LARGE
ROOM IN A CIRCLE AND WATCHED AS OLAF WRECKED HIS VENGEANCE UPON
THE HYSTERICAL DOCTOR! EACH TIME THAT BLACKPOOL SLIPPED FROM
OLAF'S IMMENSE TEARING HANDS, THE EAGER INMATES PUSHED HIM BACK...

AND SO I LEAVE THE HAPPY CIRCLE
OF MANIACS AT CROYDON... ALL OF
WHOM *SEEM* TO BE HAVING A
RIPPING GOOD TIME... AND
BRING MY STORY TO ITS INEVI-
TABLE END! I HOPE YOU WERE
NAD ABOUT POOR DOCTOR BLACK-
POOL'S PUNISHMENT! EVEN NICE,
MILD, OLD MR. FORTNEY WENT
CRAZY OVER IT!
AND YOU'D BE CRAZY NOT TO
FILL IN YOUR EC COMICS
COLLECTIONS WITH OUR BACK
ISSUES. FOR DETAILS...



READ THE
VAULT-
KEEPER'S
CORNER!
'BYE, NOW!

THE END

YOU SAY YOU
DON'T GET OUT MUCH?



YOU SAY IT'S A 45-MINUTE BUS TRIP, WITH A TRANSFER, TO THE COMIC BOOK SHOP? YOU SAY IT'S A HARROWING 30-MINUTE DRIVE ON THE EXPRESSWAY TO THE MALL, AND THEN A 30-MINUTE MERRY-GO-ROUND RIDE TO FIND A PARKING PLACE? YOU SAY YOUR TOWN DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A COMIC BOOK SHOP OR BOOKSTORE? IS THAT WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU, BUNKY? WELL, THEN, YOU SHOULD...



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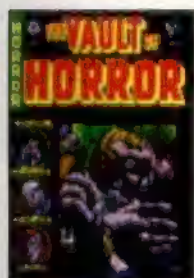
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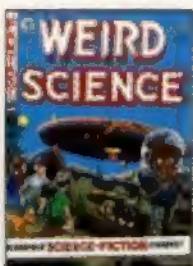
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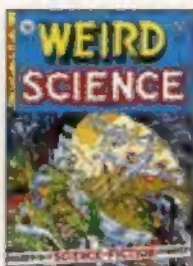
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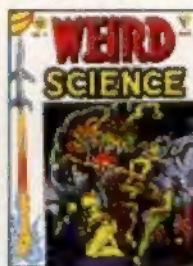
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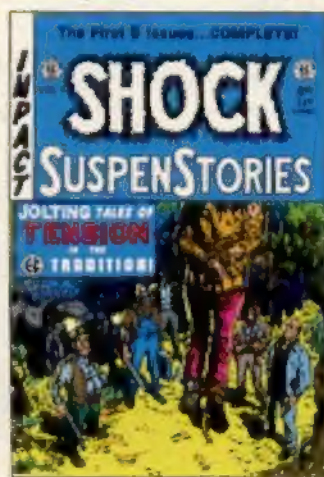
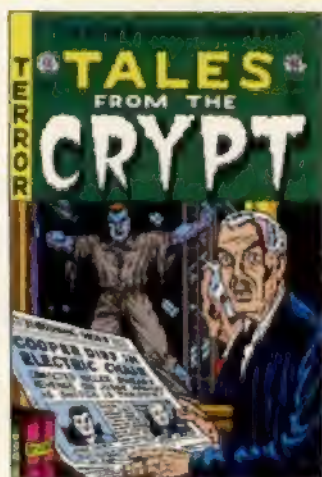
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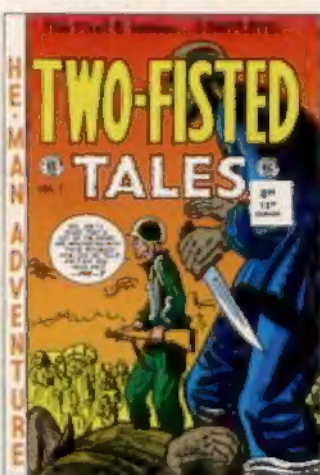
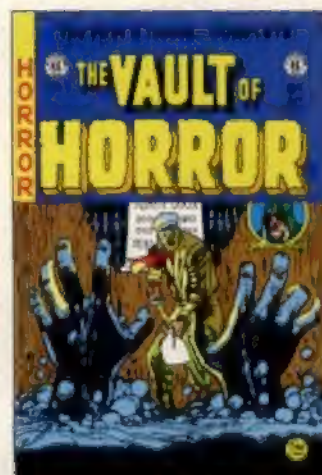
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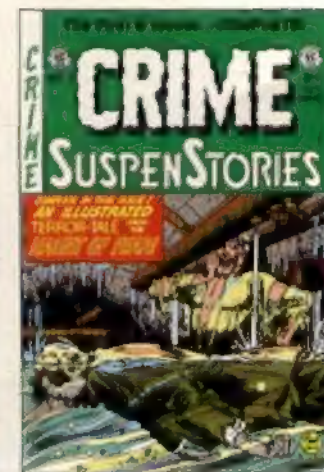
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